has taken Into consideration various relevant factors including, *inter-alia,* health care financing, equity, public health infrastrucutre, etc. which would have an impact on making available and improving the quality of health care services in the country. The Central Government will continue to play an important roie in designing national health programmes with the active participation of the State Governments.

(e) and (f) In order to encourage private hospitals to expand medical infrastructure or establish new facilities, it has been proposed in the Budget 2003-04 to extend the benefit of Section 10(23G) of Income Tax Act to such financial institutions as provide long term capital to private hospitals with 100 beds or more. It is also proposed to reduce the customs duty on specified life saving equipment for 25 percent to 5 percent and also exempt them from counterveiling duty (CVD). Further, it is proposed to extend the concessional duty rate of 5% to some -more life saving drugs. CVD on 88 specified life saving drugs and specified life saving medical equipment presently attracting 5% customs duty has been reduced to NIL by exempting them from excise duty. Basic customs duty on glucometers and glocometer test strips used by diabetics is proposed to be reduced from 10% to 5%. To assist citizens with impaired vision, the basic custom duties on rough opthalmic blanks will be reduced from 25 to 5 percent. Drugs and materials for clinical trials will also be exempt from customs duty.

Vacancies in CGHS dispensaries

1929. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of posts of various categories lying vacant in CGHS dispensaries at present, State-wise and since when; and

(b) by when the above said posts are likely to be filled up especially for SCs and STs?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House.